

CLAIM LISTING

1-17. (Cancelled)

18. (New) A computer executable method for resolution of a negotiation between two or more parties including one or more issues to be resolved, operative to control one or more computers and stored on at least one computer readable medium, the method when executed by said one or more computers comprising the steps of:

- a) receiving in at least one of said computers one or more proposals for agreement from each of said parties in said negotiation regarding the one or more issues to be resolved;
- b) generating with at least one of said computers one or more suggestions that are based on said received proposals and seek to provide at least one potential resolution to the negotiation;
- c) providing each of said suggestions to each of said parties;
- d) receiving in confidence in at least one of said computers from each of said parties an indication as to whether that party accepts one or more of said suggestions; and
- e) generating an indication with at least one of said computers that said parties have reached an agreement if all said parties accept one or more of the same said suggestions, but if not, generating an indication with at least one of said computers that said parties have not reached an agreement.

19. (New) The method of claim 18, wherein the step of receiving in at least one of said computers one or more proposals for agreement from each of said parties in said

negotiation regarding the issues to be resolved is carried out by entering said proposals into at least one of said computers using an interactive graphical interface in communication with at least one of said computers.

20. (New) The method of claim 18, wherein said proposals for agreement are accompanied by information defining each party's preferences on the outcome of the one or more issues, and said one or more suggestions generated by at least one of said computers are also based on said preferences and define said suggestions in terms of a specified level of satisfaction for each party on each issue according to said preferences.
21. (New) The method of claim 20, wherein the step of generating one or more suggestions based on said received proposals further comprises generating said one or more suggestions based on other previously generated suggestions.
22. (New) The method of claim 21, wherein the step of receiving in at least one of said computers one or more proposals for agreement from each of said parties in said negotiation regarding the one or more issues to be resolved further includes receiving in at least one of said computers from any party to the negotiation, private suggestions that are indistinguishable from said suggestions that are computer generated; and said step of providing each of said suggestions to said parties comprises providing each of said computer generated suggestions and each of said private suggestions to said parties.

23. (New) The method of claim 22, wherein said negotiation includes multiple issues to be resolved and said method further includes the step of entering into at least one of said computers through said graphical interface, tradeoff preference information that defines the relative importance to each of the parties for each of the issues.
24. (New) The method of claim 23, further including the steps of
- a) entering detailed tradeoff and satisfaction function preference information or other information from which that information may be derived;
 - b) analyzing those preferences to determine said specified satisfaction levels more precisely;
 - c) using optimization techniques to generate an improved suggestion that is Pareto optimal according to said entered preferences; and
 - d) displaying said improved suggestion on said graphical interface.
25. (New) The method of claim 24, further including the steps of:
- a) entering into at least one of said computers changed preference information, said preference information including any of acceptance of proposals or suggestions; retraction of previous acceptances; and different proposals or suggestions; and
 - b) in response to said entering of said changed preference information, at least one of said computers generating one or more new suggestions.

26. (New) The method of claim 25, wherein said step in response to said entering of said changed preference information, of at least one of said computers generating one or more suggestions further comprises:

- a) identifying a plurality of proposals or suggestions, one for each of said parties, each said proposal or suggestion being acceptable to its corresponding party and providing a specified level of satisfaction for that party;
- b) if said plurality of proposals or suggestions are not identical to one another, generating a suggestion that is different from said plurality of proposals or suggestions, using optimization techniques to analyze said preference information and provide a level of satisfaction for each said party that is at least as great as the level of satisfaction provided by each said party's acceptable proposal or suggestion; and,
- c) displaying said generated suggestion on said interactive graphical interface for consideration together with other suggestions for agreement.

27. (New) The method of claim 26, wherein a plurality of independent, separate computer systems is provided, one each for each of said parties, each said independent, separate computer system being programmed to receive and process information from each party, including that pertaining to each of said party's preferences on the outcome of each said issue involved in said negotiation; and,

a central computer system located at a neutral site is provided that is programmed to receive preference information from each of said independent, separate computer systems, generate at least one suggestion for agreement in response to entered preference

information from each of said independent, separate computer systems, and securely transmit generated information and other information to be communicated between parties; wherein, the information pertaining to each of said party's preferences remains confidential to each party.

28. (New) The computer-based method of claim 18, wherein a plurality of independent, separate computer systems is provided, one each for each of said parties, each said independent, separate computer system being programmed to receive and process information from each party, including that pertaining to each of said party's preferences on the outcome of each said issue involved in said negotiation; and

a central computer system located at a neutral site is provided that is programmed to receive preference information from each of said independent, separate computer systems, generate at least one suggestion for agreement in response to entered preference information from each of said independent, separate computer systems, and securely transmit generated information and other information to be communicated between parties; wherein, the information pertaining to each of said party's preferences remains confidential to each party.

29. (New) The method of claim 18, wherein the step of receiving in at least one of said computers one or more proposals for agreement from each of said parties in said negotiation regarding the one or more issues to be resolved further includes receiving in at least one of said computers from any party to the negotiation, private suggestions that are indistinguishable from said suggestions that are computer generated; and said step of

providing each of said suggestions to said parties comprises providing each of said computer generated suggestions and each of said private suggestions to said parties.